

## A Fulfilled Christian Life, Part 4 - Romans 12:4-5 – December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series titled; "A Fulfilled Christian Life," and in taking two verses, we are going to live on the edge.
- In the first three verses, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, has shown us three ways, in which we can live holy, fulfilled, and joy filled Christian lives.

### 1. By laying my life down for Him (Verse 1)

- v1 Paul says therefore in light of God's mercy to offer our bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God as our spiritual act of worship.

### 2. By renewing my mind in Him (Verse 2)

- v2 Paul says conform no longer to the worlds pattern. Be transformed by renewing of your mind to prove what God's perfect will is for you.

### 3. By living humbly before Him (Verse 3)

- v3 He says think not more highly of yourself than you ought, rather think of yourself with sober judgment according to the faith God gives.

### 4. By functioning as a body with Him (Verses 4-5)

- v4 The Apostle Paul explains that just as each of us has one body with many members, these members do not all function in the same way.
- v5 He then says how this is true in Christ, by virtue of how we, who are many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Paul will expound on how this all plays out in the verses that follow.

- Be that as it may and by way of an analogy, Paul must first download the app, if you will, before it can begin functioning in our Christian life.
- Absent this, my Christian life will become dysfunctional, and that kind of Christian life, is an unfulfilled Christian life, void of joy in ones life.
- Conversely, when one functions as a member of the body of Christ, they will fulfill their purpose, which in turns fulfills them, because of it.

- Here's how I get there, when I realize I have a unique function as a member of the body of Christ, it gives me purpose, and with it much joy.
- This because, I belong, and have value, as one of many members making up the body of Christ, such that I have a function and a role in it.
- Sadly, many a Christian has resigned themselves to this notion that they are insignificant, and as such, unimportant within the body of Christ.

- There's a remarkable example of this in, of all places the book of Judges, which we're studying on Thursday nights, namely, in chapter 10.
- The first two verses begin with something that's very peculiar as it relates to sixth deliverer or judge of Israel whose name we're told is Tola.
- What's peculiar is there are only two verses recorded for him, though he judged Israel for twenty-three years, which is longer than Samson.

- The question becomes, why is it that nothing is said of this deliverer, other than he dwelt, he judged, he died, and he was buried, that's it.
- I'm of the belief that one of the reasons is he didn't get into as much trouble as some of the others, whom we consider as the major judges.
- In other words, while they may be seen as a minor judge as we would see a minor prophet of whom little is recorded, much can be learned.

- Here's what I'm thinking this Tola, and even Jair after him, who also gets only two verses, though minor judges, teach us major life lessons.

- Chief of which is we do err greatly when we mitigate the magnificence of those faithfully serving and ministering in obscurity and anonymity.
- In our economy, those unknown servants aren't perceived as having as much value in the body of Christ as those who are very well known.
- This is precisely Paul's point, while some think more highly of themselves than they ought, others think less of themselves than they ought.

1 Corinthians 12:14-26 NIV (14) Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. (15) If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. (16) And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. (17) If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? (18) But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. (19) If they were all one part, where would the body be? (20) As it is, there are many parts, but one body. (21) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" (22) On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, (23) and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, (24) while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, (25) so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. (26) If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

- At the risk of giving a dissertation on the human anatomy, have you ever considered the paramount importance of the big toe to our body?
- Not only is the big toe indispensable, so too are the little toes, for they will feel the ground that we walk on and in so doing they balance us.
- While the little toes provide us with balance, the big toe is also balancing us, so as to provide us with the strength we need to run, jog, etc.

- In fact, according to recent research, it's believed that as much as 40% of our body's weight is distributed to the big toe. Mine carries a lot!
- It's for this reason that if we were to lose our big toe, we would be in serious Kimchee, as it were, because serious problems would ensue.
- Simple things like walking would become extremely difficult, as the other toes would balance that weight, which would cause deformities.

One commentator writes of the fictional account of a Master Tool Convention. As the story goes, Brother Hammer was appointed to preside over the Master Tool Convention. Brother Screwdriver objected, saying, "Brother Hammer, you're too noisy to preside over this meeting. You're always driving home your point, always nailing people. I call for your resignation immediately." Brother Hammer responded, "Well, what about you, Brother Screwdriver? All you ever do is spin around in circles." "That may be true," said Brother Screwdriver, "but at least I'm not like Brother Plane. His work is so surface, so shallow. What right does he have to even be here?" "If you're going to kick me out," protested Brother Plane, "what about Brother Ruler? He thinks he's always right, measuring everyone else by his standard." "Well, if you're going to come down on me," argued Brother Ruler, "what about Brother Pliers? He needs to get a grip!" "At least I don't rub people the wrong way," said Brother Pliers, staring at Brother Sandpaper." Just then, the Master Craftsman walked in. And, as He used each tool at the perfect time, He created an object of great beauty.